



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALPHA BATTERY, 1ST BATTALION, 79TH FIELD ARTILLERY
5970 SOUTH BOUNDARY ROAD
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503

19 September

2019

Commander, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 79th Field Artillery

Dear Parents, Family Members, and Friends:

I am Captain Anthony Manduca, your Soldier's Battery Commander. Since their arrival at Alpha Battery, your Soldiers have continually impressed me by proving their toughness every day. They are motivated, fit, knowledgeable, and ready to graduate! Before they do, however, there are still a few more weeks of rigorous and necessary training.

This is the time in the cycle when families are anxious to make travel plans to see their Soldier graduate. This letter will provide you with the information you need in order to make your travel plans. You might consider not making travel purchases until you have heard from your Soldier that they will graduate. We will make every effort to have your Soldier contact you when their graduation is confirmed. However, I cannot guarantee who they will call. They may call their significant other or a friend and fail to notify you (the family member). This is beyond my control. **Please do not contact the battery asking whether or not your Soldier will graduate.** No news is good news! When you make your travel plans, please keep in mind travel time to the airports; approximately 1.5 hours from Oklahoma City to the Lawton/Fort Sill area and 20 minutes from the Lawton Regional Airport.

It is recommended that if you are purchasing plane tickets, that you **purchase refundable tickets**. There have been several instances in the past where it has been decided in the last week or two of the cycle that the Soldier will not graduate. If your Soldier is having trouble passing his/her physical fitness tests, they will be given at least two extra attempts. These extra attempts are during weeks 8 and 9 of Basic Combat Training (BCT). You will not receive notice from the Soldier unless they have failed the last make up test. Again, this is beyond my control. I cannot graduate a Soldier who has not passed their final Basic Physical Fitness Test (BPFT). In these instances, the families still came and attended graduation but did not get to see their Soldier walk across the stage during graduation. I cannot stress enough the importance of **making refundable travel plans**.

While you are here, we ask that you help preserve the historical significance of Fort Sill. Please wear appropriate attire and act accordingly. There is no dress code, but vulgar or distasteful slogans or exposures are not acceptable for these family events. **All civilian and military personnel entering Fort Sill must have a valid state issued driver's license or military ID, insurance, and current registration at the gate with the provided gate pass.** Family members who has their driver's license or state ID issued in Minnesota or Missouri must present a second form of ID which includes but not limited to a passport, a picture ID, birth certificate, etc. If you did not send in the documents to receive a visitor pass, you will need to apply for one at the Visitor Control Center prior to entering the Sheridan Road Gate. If this is the case, I kindly ask that you arrive early so that you

have time to obtain your pass and still make it to Family Day or Graduation on time. If for some reason you followed all of the instructions and your pass is not at the Visitor Control Center waiting for you, you will still be able to fill out a form and receive one. I ask that you please remain tactful. Please do not show a disrespectful attitude towards the employees at the Visitor Control Center if your pass is not there. Please be patient with us and the Visitor Control Center, as over 250 passes are submitted weekly. All personally owned vehicles are subject to search by Fort Sill Police. Privately owned firearms are **Not Allowed** on Fort Sill. Larger bags, parcels, and backpacks will not be permitted at these events. Use of cellular phones while driving on Fort Sill is strictly prohibited. Please cooperate with these measures.

The **Family Orientation Townhall** will be held at the **Cache Creek Chapel Complex (CCCC)**(6043 Rothwell Street, Fort Sill, OK 73503) at **6:00 PM to 7:30 PM** on **October 9, 2019, 2019**. The Townhall will orient you to Family Day and Graduation activities, the Lawton, Fort Sill area, Question and Answer Session with the Battery Command Team, and standards of conduct for the events.

The **Family Day** Ceremony will begin at **9:00 AM** on **October 10, 2019, 2019** at **Destroyer Park on Fort Sill**. If you access the maps application on your cellular device and type in "Destroyer Park", it should take you to the location. Family Day highlights your Soldier's achievements over the Basic Combat Training cycle. This is done through a series of demonstrations on weapons, tactics, drill and ceremony, and physical fitness. Then I will provide essential information on the pass policies for Family Day and Graduation. At the conclusion of this ceremony, your Soldier **MAY** be released on a day pass with you, to visit the Lawton/Fort Sill area. Weather here changes rapidly, so please be sure to check the forecast and dress accordingly.

The **Graduation Ceremony** will begin at **10:00 AM** on **October 11, 2019, 2019** at the **Cache Creek Chapel Complex (CCCC) located at 6043 Rothwell Street, Fort Sill, OK 73503**. (This address will also populate on most map programs on cellular devices.) During the ceremony, please feel free to take pictures of your Soldier as they graduate. Please keep the aisles clear for Soldier movements during the ceremony. The graduating class will be seated together and will not have an opportunity to socialize before or during this time. If you arrive earlier than 30 minutes before the ceremony begins, you will not be permitted to enter the facility. Ensure that you arrive on time. The timeline for Family Orientation Townhall, Family Day, and Graduation Day is as follows:

Family Orientation Townhall: October 9, 2019

5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Arrival for Townhall
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Townhall

Family Day: October 10, 2019

(It will be an outside event! Dress accordingly and bringing sunblock is recommended.)

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Arrival for the Family Day Activities
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Family Day Ceremony
10:00 a.m. – 7:45 p.m.	Pass Privileges
7:50 p.m.	Accountability Formation

Graduation: October 11, 2019

9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Doors Open/Seating Begins at the CCCC
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Graduation Ceremony
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Series Soldiers Travel to the Battery for out-processing
11:00 a.m. - 7:45 p.m.	Pass Privileges (Everyone minus Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Soldiers)
7:50 p.m.	Accountability Formation

Immediately following the graduation, we will transport the Soldiers back to the Battery Headquarters and they will be released on pass. Soldiers remaining at Fort Sill, (Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery series military occupational specialties (MOS)) will ship to their respective Advanced Individual Training (AIT) unit before they are released for pass. Field Artillery (MOS 13 series) Soldiers will ship to 1-78 Field Artillery Battalion on **Friday 11 October** at 12:00 pm. The families and friends of Field Artillery Soldiers need to attend a brief before they are able to sign their Soldier out on a pass. AIT is located at the 1-78 FA BN Headquarters, Building 2735 Bragg Street, Fort Sill, OK 73503. This pass has historically been a weekend pass, requiring Soldiers to sign back in to their gaining unit on Sunday night. I cannot promise that this will be the case, so try to make your plans as flexible as you can. All Soldiers remaining at Fort Sill who are Air Defense Artillery (MOS 14 series) Soldiers will ship to their respective AIT unit on **Friday 11 October** at 12:00 pm. They will ship to 30th Air Defense Artillery Brigade. These Soldiers may or may not be released to families for pass.

Soldiers with follow on assignments, at different posts, will be released after graduation from the Battery Headquarters, but must report back by **7:45 PM** for accountability. These Soldiers will be shipped out that night to their follow-on assignments, throughout the country. Soldiers will travel by government arranged travel to their follow-on locations. Soldiers will not be permitted to drive their personal owned vehicles or travel with Family members to their Advanced Individual Training (AIT) destination, as government travel plans have already been arranged and paid for.

I hope you enjoy your visit to the Lawton/Fort Sill Area. Lawton/Fort Sill offers a wide array of attractions. As you may know, Fort Sill is located in southwest Oklahoma and is surrounded by the Wichita Mountains. If you take a drive through the Wichita Mountains, you can visit several tourist sites such as Mount Scott, the Holy City, and the Wildlife Refuge Center. In Lawton, you can enjoy the Great Plains Museum and enjoy some local entertainment. On Fort Sill, you can tour Geronimo's Guard House and Gravesite, the Old Post Quadrangle Museum, and the U.S. Army Field Artillery Museum. While you are here, you might check out the Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area (LETRA), which has mini golf and areas for picnics. The USO (located at 3265 Crane Ave, Ft. Sill, OK 73503 next to the Sheridan Theater) offers self-paced phone tours for any number of the sites and scenes immediately surrounding the Lawton/Fort Sill area.

You can find additional information about local hotels and restaurants in the Lawton/Fort Sill area at the Chamber of Commerce website: <http://www.lawtonfortsillchamber.com/>. Additional information can be found at <http://sill-www.army.mil/INDEX/maps/>, <http://sill-www.army.mil/>, and <http://fortsillgraduations.com/>.

While you are here please remember the following general rules. Soldiers are not allowed to drink alcohol or consume nicotine products. They are not allowed to visit establishments whose primary purpose of business is to serve alcohol (Bars, Clubs, and Cigar Lounges). While you, the family and friends, are welcome to visit any of the surrounding casinos, your Soldier is **Not** permitted in those establishments. Your Soldier must remain in the uniform you pick them up in, the Army Service Uniform, throughout their entire Day Pass. Your Soldier is not permitted to operate any motor vehicle, motorcycle, or recreational vehicle while on pass. More information will be given out on **October 10** during **Family Day**.

You can contact me via telephone at any time at the following number (580) 442-1308, through the battery facebook page, or by email at alphabattery179@gmail.com. On behalf of the Battery Cadre and Drill Sergeants, we look forward to meeting you at graduation.

Peace Through Victory!

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Manduca
CPT, FA
Commanding